

SPENDING REDUCTIONS

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(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, if House liberals had their way, last year we would have spent billions more. I want every taxpayer across America to know that it is this Republican leadership and Republican majority that is talking about spending cuts, spending less, not the Democrats. It is this Republican majority that is talking about continued tax relief for hardworking American families, not the Democrats.

You are going to hear the Democrats say, well, those Republicans, they didn't invite us to come participate in talking about spending cuts, to talk about reducing Federal spending. Mr. Speaker, I hope they will consider this the invitation: Come join us. We would love to have all your input and ideas.

So from this point on, they can stop talking about how we need to spend more and help us find ways to be better stewards and spend less. Let us be frank. The Democrat solution, raising taxes, is not a solution. This government does not have a revenue problem. This government has a spending problem. Mr. Speaker, we invite them to join us.

NEED FOR A CHANGE IN WASHINGTON (CULTURE OF CORRUPTION CANNOT CONTINUE)

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, the American people want change here in Washington, DC. Over the last couple of months, they have seen the headlines of scandal in the ranks of the House and Senate Republican leadership. They have seen the continuing scandal at the White House that should lead to the firing of Karl Rove and Scooter Libby. They have seen that the President's cronies are now entrenched in important government agencies and some of them are as unprepared for their jobs as Michael Brown was at FEMA.

The American people want to know when Republicans here in Washington are finally going to stop doing the bidding of the wealthiest elite and start focusing on issues more important to them. They are concerned about an economy where their paychecks are not rising as high or as fast as the cost of living. They are also wondering how they are going to continue to afford their health care premiums, gas for their cars, and heat for their homes in the winter.

They look to Washington and correctly see that House Republicans refuse to even consider their concerns. Republicans are simply too busy helping their friends. It is time for a change all right, and Democrats are ready to lead by providing creative solutions to our Nation's needs.

STEALING THE FEDERAL WAY

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, tattoos, lingerie, Ozzie Osbourne concert tickets, gambling, cruises, exotic dance clubs, prostitutes, and new sports cars. Members may ask what this list is. No, it is not Larry Flynt's Christmas wish list. These are examples of purchases made on Federal credit cards by Federal employees for which American taxpayers picked up the bill; they always do.

Today I have introduced the Government Credit Card Sunshine Act. This act is simple. It requires every government credit card bill to be posted on the government Inspector General's Web site within 15 days of its use. It also states that Federal employees whose credit card abuse is more than \$500 shall face immediate dismissal, be forced to repay the bill, and sometimes return the items. This serious scandal is stealing and is unacceptable behavior. We are now going to hold Federal employees accountable for ripping off America. So no more abusing the Federal credit card at the taxpayers' expense; otherwise, pack your toothbrush, you are out of here.

H.R. 3966, SLICE ACT

(Mr. UDALL of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, we need to change our budget policies. We should use the better, the fairer, and the more bipartisan approach to spending cuts that would come from passing H.R. 3966. That is a bill I introduced with the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT), the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), and the gentleman from Colorado (Mrs. MUSGRAVE).

It is called the Stimulating Leadership and Cutting Expenditures Act, or SLICE for short. SLICE would require an up-or-down vote on each specific cut the President proposes in the recently passed transportation bill and current appropriations bills. It is a workable and constitutional alternative to the line item veto designed to enable Presidential leadership and require congressional accountability.

Mr. Speaker, before we cut critical health care, education and other programs that help working Americans, let us work in a bipartisan way to consider other cuts. Let us pass H.R. 3966 and slice the budget the right way.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR LIHEAP NEEDED

(Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a problem that many Americans are facing as we approach winter: the cost of heating their homes.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration recently projected that the cost of heating a home this winter, regardless of the type of fuel, will increase dramatically from last year. In order to counteract this dramatic spike in energy costs, we need to increase funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP. It is a tremendously successful program that enables States to provide low-income families with energy assistance.

In my State of New Hampshire, LIHEAP funding helps people afford to heat their homes and not have to make the difficult choices of paying their rent, of buying food and medications, or keeping their homes warm.

In order to simply meet last year's purchasing power, we must increase LIHEAP funding by \$1.276 billion. This is an issue that crosses State and party lines and one that needs to be addressed immediately.

Mr. Speaker, let us act today to increase this funding before Hurricane Katrina claims more victims this winter.

HELPING MOTHERS SUFFERING FROM POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

(Mr. RUSH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, this morning we learned that a 23-year-old mother threw her three children off a pier in San Francisco killing them all. Apparently she heard voices that told her to commit this unthinkable act.

Mr. Speaker, we do not know yet whether this woman suffered from a most severe form of postpartum disorder known as postpartum psychosis. We do know that postpartum depression and psychosis can emerge even a year after a child's birth.

That is why for the last three Congresses I have introduced the Melanie Blocker Stokes Postpartum Depression Research and Care Act, H.R. 1940. My bill would direct funds to researching this misunderstood disorder, and it would also provide grants for services and care for mothers who suffer from postpartum depression.

I urge all of my colleagues in the House to cosponsor this important bill. What happened in San Francisco happens way too often in this Nation, and we must do what we can to prevent similar tragedies in the future. The mothers of America desperately need this Congress to recognize this deadly malady and pass H.R. 1940.

JUSTICE FOR SADDAM HUSSEIN

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the war on terror is slow going. In Iraq, suicide bombers and terrorists continue to spread fear across the Sunni provinces in the center of the country. Many of our soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice. Some folks here at home wonder where the war is going.

It is important to step back and look at the big picture. Just this week, millions of Iraqis have once again exercised the right to vote, a right denied them for decades. And yesterday, the Tyrant of Baghdad was brought to trial.

Two things we take for granted here at home: the right to choose our own government and the guarantee of real justice in a court of law. Saddam Hussein is at long last standing trial for his crimes against humanity. The chickens are coming home to roost for those who have painted the past with blood, and the people of Iraq with their ink-stained fingers are creating a new tomorrow according to popular will.

No matter how difficult life remains in Baghdad and the Anbar Province, the future is now full of hope.

Mr. Speaker, we are the good guys in this war. We are helping create a better world. God bless our troops and the citizens of the new Iraq.

ASSISTANCE FOR AMERICA'S POOR

(Mr. MARKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans have decided not to bring the bill to the House floor today which would slash Medicaid, slash programs for student loans, slash programs for poor people because many conservatives say they are not cutting enough programs for poor people, all to protect tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. All to protect tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. And what is the excuse they have used? Hurricane Katrina.

That is why they must cut more programs for poor people, because they do not want to cut the tax cuts, and now they want to delay because Hurricane Wilma is on the way, and the Republicans are saying, Let us wait until the weekend is over and see how big that hurricane is, and then we will be able to cut more programs for poor people, more programs for those most in need in our society, rather than touching those tax breaks for the wealthiest in our country.

Mr. Speaker, hurricanes are the greatest friend conservative Republicans ever had to hurt the poorest people in the country and protect the wealthiest.

COMMENDING CENTURY COUNCIL

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Congressional Hispanic Conference to recognize the Century Council and Nickelodeon for their creation of an innovative new program to educate middle school kids about underaged drinking.

The Century Council is a national not-for-profit organization funded by America's leading distillers to develop and implement programs designed to combat drunk driving and underaged drinking.

The Congressional Hispanic Conference has teamed up with Century Council and Nickelodeon to launch Ask, Listen, Learn: Kids and Alcohol Do Not Mix. The program helps adults and children communicate early and often about this important issue in a format and a language designed specifically for them.

I commend the Century Council and Nickelodeon for giving Hispanic parents and children across the Nation such a valuable communications tool to initiate these critically important discussions regarding the dangers of alcohol.

NO NEW TAX ON HOMEOWNERSHIP

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the cost to buy a new home is about to go up in America. Why is that? Because as soon as next week, Congress is about to vote on placing a new tax on homeownership, a tax that may well raise the cost for the average American who wants to buy their new home.

Years ago, Congress set up Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac with the noble intent to add liquidity to the marketplace and help home buyers. But in an about-face, Congress is about to impose a new tax and at the same time fail to address an inherent flaw in the current system.

Mr. Speaker, legislation before the House would allow Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to continue to rack up debt on their balance sheets with no limits. These are the same organizations that have been wracked with financial accounting scandals, may have 1.5 to \$1.7 trillion on their balance sheets right now. I say "may" because no one can get a clear financial picture from these entities.

Alan Greenspan has testified to this problem repeatedly, noting that without restriction on the size of the GSE balance sheets, we put at risk our ability to preserve safe and sound financial markets in the United States. American homeowners deserve better. We need to help them and not hurt them.

DEMOCRATS NEED A NEW PLAY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a fiscal conservative to set the record straight that Republicans are the party of fiscal discipline. Earlier this year, Republicans passed the budget that cut \$100 billion from the deficit. What did Democrats do? They refused to vote for the budget, another act in their play of obstruction.

Republicans have recommended 98 programs be terminated for a total savings of more than \$4.3 billion. And under Republican leadership, domestic discretionary spending is currently on track to be below last year's levels. What have the Democrats done? Over the last 3 years they have attempted to bust the discretionary budget in the appropriations process by more than \$60 billion. They hope to finance this by raising taxes on small businesses.

So it is not surprising at a time when we must be watchful of taxpayer dollars the Democrats have turned to their playbook and called up one of their favorites, the old tax and spend.

It is time for the Democrats to come up with a new play. In 1997, 51 Democrats had the courage to help Republicans pass the last major entitlement reform bill. I hope they can find that courage again.

PROTECTION OF LAWFUL COMMERCE IN ARMS ACT

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 493, I call up the Senate bill (S. 397) to prohibit civil liability actions from being brought or continued against manufacturers, distributors, dealers, or importers of firearms or ammunition for damages, injunctive or other relief resulting from the misuse of their products by others, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 397

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

(2) The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution protects the rights of individuals, including those who are not members of a militia or engaged in military service or training, to keep and bear arms.

(3) Lawsuits have been commenced against manufacturers, distributors, dealers, and importers of firearms that operate as designed and intended, which seek money damages and other relief for the harm caused by the misuse of firearms by third parties, including criminals.